

**MINUTES OF THE
REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, June 22, 2011 – 6:00 p.m. – Centennial Middle School, Provo, Utah

Members Present:

Sen. Ralph Okerlund, Senate Chair
Rep. Kenneth W. Sumsion, House Chair
Sen. Gene Davis
Sen. Benjamin M. McAdams
Sen. Kevin T. Van Tassell
President Michael G. Waddoups
Rep. Roger E. Barrus
Rep. Melvin R. Brown
Rep. Gage Froerer
Rep. Francis D. Gibson
Rep. Neal B. Hendrickson
Rep. Don L. Ipson
Rep. Brian S. King

Rep. Todd E. Kiser
Speaker Rebecca D. Lockhart
Rep. Merlynn T. Newbold
Sen. Stuart C. Reid
Rep. Christine F. Watkins
Rep. R. Curt Webb

Staff Present:

Mr. John Q. Cannon, Managing Policy Analyst
Mr. Joseph T. Wade, Policy Analyst
Mr. Benjamin N. Christensen, Policy Analyst
Mr. Christopher M. McClelland, Research Assistant
Ms. Angela Oakes Stallings, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Joy L. Miller, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Committee Business

Chair Sumsion called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Members of the Committee introduced themselves and indicated the areas of the state that they represent.

2. Overview of Redistricting

Mr. McClelland gave a presentation on what redistricting is, why it is done, and the redistricting principles that were adopted by the Committee at the May 4, 2011 meeting. He discussed the ideal populations for Senate and House districts and outlined the timeline for the redistricting process.

Mr. McClelland gave an overview of the redistricting public website, RedistrictUtah.com and demonstrated the online redistricting tool that allows the public to create redistricting plans. He explained that the plans created can be shared or submitted to the Legislature for review and will be posted on RedistrictUtah.com.

3. Public Comment and Committee Discussion About Redistricting

Sen. Okerlund discussed the 1% Senate plan submitted by President Waddoups. He noted that the plan will require some changes that will have a ripple effect on the other districts. He outlined those areas of the state that have experienced a significant increase in population growth.

Rep. Sumsion distributed his proposed U.S. Congressional Plan H and the Utah County House Plan and explained how he began the process of drawing these maps. He reiterated the requirement to use 2010 census data. Rep. Sumsion responded to questions from the public.

Sen. Curtis S. Bramble, State Senate District 16, referred to the proposed Senate plan and commented that approximately 25 percent of Utah County residents would be represented by senators from Sanpete,

Carbon, Tooele, or Salt Lake counties.

Mr. Wayne Andersen, Mayor, Spanish Fork City, read a resolution expressing concern that splitting Spanish Fork will eliminate the ability for anyone from Spanish Fork to be elected to the Senate and deprive Spanish Fork city of local representation. He discouraged the approval of Sen. Waddoups proposed Senate plan. Mr. Anderson read a second resolution supported by mayors of several southern Utah County cities recommending that south Utah County be part of one state Senate district.

Mr. Wilford Clyde, Mayor, Springville City, said that Springville also passed a similar resolution in its city council meeting.

Mr. Craig Coleman, Utah State Board of Education, District 3, indicated that there are 15 seats on the State Board of Education. He explained that the way his district is designed is not a natural juxtaposition of areas. He expressed the need for these districts to have natural boundaries.

Speaker Lockhart asked if the Redistricting Committee and the State Board of Education could discuss the number of school board seats and whether the number of seats should be changed. Chair Sumsion indicated that the Committee is looking into this issue.

Mr. Wade Jacoby, citizen, expressed concern with elected officials choosing who will vote for them. He stressed the need for an independent commission.

Speaker Lockhart pointed out that the Utah Constitution specifically requires the Legislature, not an independent commission, draw the lines. She indicated that the Legislature is accountable to the people.

Ms. Peggy Burdett, Orem City resident, recommended that, as much as possible, the Committee follow permanent boundaries that will not shift or change with the census. She expressed concern with how much Utah County was split in 2001, which she felt left disenfranchised voters who went 10 years without having the right legislator's name on their ballots.

Mr. Thayne Bailey, Orem City resident, said he would like to see Utah County better represented by not having Senate districts that include a lot of southern Utah and Utah County together.

Mr. Beau Sorenson, Legislative Chair, District 59, Orem City, stated he has submitted Senate, House, and congressional maps using this online tool. He asked the Committee to consider existing political subdivision boundaries such as counties, cities, school districts, and roads when developing district maps.

Mr. Blair Bateman, Utah County Democrats, said if government was truly representative of the people the priority would not be to disenfranchise groups of voters who would not be likely to vote for a candidate of a particular party. He expressed concern that legislators get to draw their own boundaries and choose the voters who are most likely to vote for them.

Rep. Gibson noted that there will be changes made to the maps that have been proposed. He pointed out how difficult and time consuming the redistricting process is and the importance of good candidates.

Mr. Will Matheson, Chair, Utah County Democratic Party, expressed the need for candidates to form a

relationship with the average voter rather than just with convention delegates. Mr. Matheson stated he would like to see a congressional map that provides for at least two districts with the most competitive number of votes for both parties. He noted that districts should be as compact as possible without mixing rural and urban interests.

Mr. Chris Beckstrom, student, Utah County, stated that the main goal should be to have fair representation for all constituents. He noted that the current one party rule in the state is not in the best interest of voters. He also expressed concern that many of the interests being listened to are those of convention delegates.

Ms. Linda Clark, Provo City resident, expressed the need for statesmanship not partisanship. She also stressed the need for strict anti-gerrymandering standards, including prompt judicial review, basic equality among districts, and districts that honor local political subdivision boundaries. She said districts should not be drawn for the purpose of any political party or person. She spoke in support of a bipartisan advisory redistricting commission with final approval by the Legislature and then the courts.

Mr. Casey Voeks, Lehi City resident, commented on the amount of time and effort that he and his brother put forth in developing a plan for state house of representatives, which keeps in mind the concepts of future growth. He said the plan submitted by Sen. Waddoups was not an accurate representation of those areas.

Mr. David Acheson, Chair, Utah County Republican Party, discussed the growth Utah County has experienced. He requested that Utah County receive five, and possibly six, Senate seats fully seated in Utah County. He also requested that Utah County receive 14 House seats.

Mr. Paul Fisher, Pleasant Grove resident, commented on the maps that have been proposed. He stressed the need to keep districts compact. He recommended that a constitutional amendment be adopted to make the residence requirement for candidates a little more flexible.

Mr. Federico Rodriguez, BYU Democrats, questioned what assurance he has as a local citizen that the Committee will listen to the interests of the minority parties in the state.

Chair Sumsion recommended that Mr. Rodriguez participate in the on-line redistricting process to help address the issues he has raised. He noted that part of the challenge is the quality of candidates.

Mr. Brian Wall, Mayor, Mapleton City, stated that Mapleton passed a resolution similar to those passed by Spanish Fork and Springville. He said they are looking for someone to champion an effort to determine if south Utah County could become a Senate district.

Ms. Lynn Sorenson, Provo City resident, and Democratic Party Chair, Legislative District 62, urged the Committee to keep communities of interest together. She asked the Committee to make every effort possible to respect existing city and county boundaries and keep the focus on people choosing their leaders rather than leaders choosing people.

Mr. Caleb Christian, Utah Valley University graduate of political science, asked what the logic was in having one pure urban congressional district. He noted that republicans are not as unified or uniform as some believe.

Chair Sumsion responded that the urban congressional district was presented as requested by other citizens and was put out for discussion.

Mr. Jacob Anderegy, Republican Chair, Lehi Precinct 19, acknowledged how difficult the redistricting process is and that not everyone will be happy with what is decided. He expressed his disapproval for Senate districts 13 and 23 as proposed. He asked the Committee to morally do its very best and try to keep representation local and fair.

Ms. Karen Ifediba, citizen, expressed her disappointment with Mapleton, Springville, and Spanish Fork being split. She asked that these areas remain together as south Utah County.

Ms. Adrielle Herring, Utah County Republican Party, expressed concern that populations in Utah County will continue to be split off in order to keep seats in other counties. She said she wanted to be represented in Utah County by those who live in Utah County.

Mr. Brian Chapman, Spanish Fork resident, said the current Senate district 27 already includes a large geographic area and that adding to the area would make it even more difficult for someone to represent the people effectively. He indicated that representation should occur in a more effective and realistic manner.

Mr. Paul Thompson, Utah Citizens Council, indicated that the council has worked on a set of principles and maps that they will submit to the website. He said they focused on keeping communities of interest together and encouraged the Committee to do the same.

Ms. Natalie Brooks, Provo City resident, expressed the need to maintain a competitive atmosphere to have high quality candidates. She noted that a candidate is already determined by the primary election. She asked that the Committee look past the upcoming election and incumbents and think of the future.

Ms. Jackie Wilson, state delegate from Alpine, commented that elected officials are responsible to represent the people. The redistricting process should not be done in a manner that would benefit a particular candidate or current legislator.

Chair Sumsion and Sen. Okerlund expressed appreciation to the public for their ideas and suggestions to help with the redistricting process.

4. Adjourn

MOTION: Rep. Ipson moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Sumsion adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.